

# **An Assessment of the Rosemount Senior Community: Building Capacity for the Future**

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## **On behalf of**

The City of Rosemount

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# Executive Summary

**Purpose:** The purpose of this report is to contribute the University of Minnesota Resilient Community Project regarding the services and needs of the senior/elder population of Rosemount, Minnesota. Three questions were asked to be investigated:

1. Are there needs the city or other agencies should address?
2. What are the best methods of outreach?
3. How to increase neighborhood cohesion, avoid isolation and address the lack of services for seniors?

**Methodology:** Information was gathered by conducting interviews in person and over the phone. Background information was gathered from The City of Rosemount website, U.S. census data, and literature review of best practices.

**Findings:** There are several reasons why seniors are not unified in Rosemount. These factors include: recreational interests, faith-based participation, geographic boundaries and income level. The Senior Club appears to be loosely connected with city officials, but is not a representative view of the community at large. Rosemount appears to lack an age-prepared strategic plan to address the needs of this growing population.

## **Recommendations:**

1. Create an Elder Coalition that meets once a month
2. Develop and/or connect seniors to volunteer opportunities within the community
3. Develop an age-prepared strategic plan addressing long-term housing needs of the senior population
4. Overall development of resources available to seniors based on a continuum of need

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# Table of Contents

<b><u>Acknowledgements</u></b>	<b><u>2</u></b>
<b><u>Introduction</u></b>	<b><u>4</u></b>
<b><u>Background</u></b>	<b><u>5</u></b>
<b><u>Methods</u></b>	<b><u>6</u></b>
<b><u>Findings</u></b>	<b><u>7</u></b>
<b><u>Discussion of Findings</u></b>	<b><u>11</u></b>
<b><u>Recommendations</u></b>	<b><u>14</u></b>
<b><u>References</u></b>	<b><u>17</u></b>
<b><u>Appendix</u></b>	<b><u>18</u></b>

# Introduction

The *Silver Tsunami* is a term used to describe the up-and-coming senior population about to retire. The Administration on Aging reports that this population is projected to increase to 55 million in 2020. An “age-prepared” community provides a framework through assessment and planning for this population and future seniors. The future growth of the older population will necessitate a more integrated aging infrastructure, with increased housing, transportation, social service, and health care options that meet the needs of both active and frail older adults.<sup>1</sup>

A common health problem among the senior population is Alzheimer’s disease, in which the Alzheimer’s Association estimates 1 in 3 seniors will be diagnosed and about 66 percent of them will be women.<sup>2</sup> The Administration on Aging has raised the alarm; the American medical infrastructure to serve seniors with Alzheimer’s is not adequate; family and community members will be not only be important, but instrumental to caring for community elders.

The senior population is a rich part of all communities. Planning is needed to ensure that seniors are able to reside where they want, for as long as they can, and have opportunities to participate as an active community member. Over 80 percent of older adults express a desire to remain in their own homes as long as possible.<sup>3</sup> A component in making sure that the aging continue to have the opportunity to be active community members is to provide an infrastructure that allows convenient utilization of services and activities that are available. Additionally, as

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<sup>1</sup> Alley, Liebig, Pynoos, Banerjee, & Choi, 2007, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Alzheimer’s Association. (2014). *Alzheimer’s facts and figures*.

<sup>3</sup> AARP, 2000.

“older persons aging in place experience declining capacity, they may need special transportation options, home modifications, in-home help, and other community-based services.”<sup>4</sup>

## Background

Rosemount’s population grew by almost 25 percent between 2000 and 2010. The city grew from 20,734 people making up 6,700 households to 27,490 people making up 9,530 households. The 2010 census results indicated the senior population in Rosemount has been a small, but growing proportion of city residents. Census data from 2000 shows that residents age 65 and older made up 5.4 percent of the population. In 2013, the percentage rose to 8.8 percent.<sup>5</sup>

In the United States, the majority of seniors are homeowners, and over 60 percent have lived in their homes for at least 11 years; developing strong ties to their communities. Approximately 86 percent of older adults give to charity organizations, over one-third participate as volunteers, and almost 20 percent provide informal care to a friend or family member.”<sup>6</sup>

Caregiving has become a necessary function for many seniors. The issue of Alzheimer's disease profoundly impacts women; 2.3 million women age 65 and older are living with the disease and 70 percent of the sole caregivers of those with Alzheimer’s and dementia are women. 10 million women are currently providing unpaid care to someone with the disease. Female caregivers generally receive less support from family and friends than male caregivers and report extensive physical, emotional and financial stress.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Alley, Liebig, Pynoos, Banerjee, & Choi, 2007, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> United States Census. (2015). *American Fact Finder*

<sup>6</sup> Alley, Liebig, Pynoos, Banerjee, & Choi, 2007, p. 1

<sup>7</sup> Alzheimer’s Association, 2014

Senior women outnumber men in Rosemount by 3%. However, census data reveals that they have earned significantly less than men, regardless of education.<sup>8</sup> Senior women who are caregivers may be at-risk for poverty; further study on this topic is recommended.

## Methods

Methods included reaching out to groups primarily composed of seniors and groups and individuals who provide services to seniors in Rosemount. We first started by visiting Rosemount, reviewing documents for the Resilient Communities Project, and reviewing community resources. We utilized a qualitative approach in gathering information from residents and stakeholders to identify themes.

A brief survey was created (Appendix A.) with the intention to have members from the Rosemount Area Seniors Group, church groups, and residents of Bards Crossing / Crosscroft would complete it. The two-question survey was created from a strengths-based approach and an overarching question that the city of Rosemount expressed regarding their aging population. Four churches were contacted to request meetings with their senior programming director or established senior groups. One church was able to provide contact information for a group of seniors that meet weekly. The survey was administered to this church senior group of eight women. We were not able to connect with people from Bard's Crossing or Crosscroft senior housing establishments. The survey was given to members of the Rosemount Area Seniors Group and left in the room at the community center. Only one response was received.

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<sup>8</sup> United States Census. (2015). *American Fact Finder*



# Findings

## Senior Interviews

Several seniors in Rosemount were interviewed to provide perspectives on the community and the new activity center. Throughout the discussions the seniors presented a snapshot of their lives in Rosemount. In terms of the activity center, the seniors interviewed pointed out how Rosemount is the only town of similar or higher population of nearby communities that does not have a dedicated senior center. They noted how the activity center being built is not going to be dedicated for seniors, but that it will have some space for them. One of the seniors discussed the community process of getting the building approved and that there are major concerns over parking the developers overlooked. The area of the new site is small and parking will have to overflow to city streets.

Another topic of discussion was housing and senior group involvement. The seniors noted how the group is diverse in terms of housing status. They told us where the public housing building was for subsidized units, but noted the lack of affordable options in general. Other members of the group still live in the same houses for 20 plus years. They discussed how there are many seniors that participate in the group, but noted some lack of community cohesion. They stated that the seniors living in the Bard's Crossing and Crosscroft apartments have their own activities and tend to participate in those. Other seniors participate in offerings through their churches. The lack of a senior center may be contributing.

We also reached out to the president of the senior group, who was agreeable to helping with the project but had significant time constraints related to her leadership and family duties. She provided contact information for other seniors who may be willing to provide insight; which was met with mixed-enthusiasm from the seniors cold-called.

Finally, one resident in particular who has lived in the city since the 1940's, noted the real change in convenience of the downtown area over the years. She mentioned that in her earlier years in the city, there was a grocery store, a drugstore, women's clothing store, and men's clothing store that made it easy to walk for day-to-day needs. As the small town developed to look like a modern suburb, the mom and pop type stores closed in favor of big box retailers. The big box stores are removed from the downtown area and require crossing a busy four-lane road.

### **Group Interview: Lutheran Church of Our Savior Senior “Women’s Group”**

**Q1: *What can the City of Rosemount do, now and as you age, to enhance your quality of life?***

Feedback: The women agreed that the City of Rosemount has made huge strides and improvements over the last five years to better meet the needs of its aging population. Some of the ways this has been done is the addition of Aldi's grocery, improved sidewalks and the addition of the park and ride. The library offers free rooms for seniors to have events; the senior center is trying to do more, the building of “The Rosemount” that will open this fall.

The women thought that the city could better coordinate with the county in advertising resources specifically noting that Dakota County is doing a very good job with its seniors.

Needs: The seniors discussed the need to get the information about services that are available into the hands of the seniors; they often do not know what is available or who to call for what they need. Ideas for this: distributing the DARTS book (that is filled with all area resources in

large print), Cameo Place senior housing/bulletin boards/public displays, medical offices, the city could do presentations at churches and other places where seniors gather.

Transportation: is a struggle, particularly for those who do not live right in town. Advertise ways for seniors to get their groceries/medications. Concern was expressed for seniors with no family members living close by. Many seniors discussed a desire for help with lawn care and snow removal; especially with their driveways after the snowplow has gone by.

MISC: This group of elders often goes to neighboring towns (Apple Valley/Lakeville) for programing because they feel Rosemount's event are not well coordinated. They advise the city to hire a Senior Coordinator to organize events and programs at the new activity center.

***Q2: What strengths do you and/or the senior community in Rosemount already have that you would like to city to know about?***

Strengths of the Aging Community:

These women definitely felt that the city was not tapping into the wealth of knowledge, time and experience that this population has to offer. They felt that they were a “worthy-untapped resource” & “free labor.” They recommended the city meet with the seniors once a month as a “citizen's input night.” The group recommended a list of places where they could volunteer that utilized their individual strengths.

**Stakeholder Interviews: The Community Center and “The Rosemount” Senior Living Community**

A historical perspective of the development process of the community center was illuminated through an interview with a Dan Schultz, Parks and Recreation Director. City officials decided to expand the singular use of a senior center to a multi-purpose activity center. City officials believe it is important to make use of center when the seniors are not utilizing the

space. It was noted that the seniors receive priority scheduling at the top of the month, access to storage closets and a kiln. Seniors have had input in the design process of the community center, focusing on square-footage needs, storage requests and room use.

“The Rosemount” is a senior living community currently under development. It offers a range of living options, included assisted living and memory care option. Developer Mark Applebaum, Makado Group and business operators from Augustana Care: Shelly Krueger, Dave Saumrow and Mary Jo Thorne expressed interest in being the “center” of serving the elder community. There will be an enclosed tunnel from the facility to the activity center and programming will be available to seniors outside the living community if there is space available.

There was some concern expressed by current Rosemount seniors that there will not be space available to residents of the city at the new facility. This is untrue; currently there is a wait list and reserve-list. A person is placed on the waitlist based on their time and date of inquiry. A person is placed on the reserve-list when they commit money down.

While exact demographics of waitlist and reserve-list clients is unknown, staff estimate 85-90% of those expressing interest are seniors from Rosemount and/or adult children wanting to move their parents to the center.

## Discussion of Findings

In meeting with a group of Rosemount seniors, they identified themselves as an “untapped resource” for the city. The greatest asset a city has is its people. Instead of focusing on just the “needs” and “deficiencies” of the aging, focusing on individual capacities allows “people to become producers rather than problems.”<sup>9</sup> Assessing what the individual gifts and talents are of the aging population, and designing programing to utilize these contributions, create a network of assets that the whole city can benefit from. An additional asset to consider when creating an “age-prepared” community is the associational and organizational capacities that already exist in the community.<sup>10</sup>

Faith-based and other existing organizations already have in place established networks with great capacity to exchange information. Such a partnership could make it convenient to connect residents with available resources, and also to offer volunteer opportunities that could meet some of the identified needs (and essentially fill in the gap between what the city can offer and what is needed). “The ability of local faith-based institutions to call upon related external organizations for support and resources constitutes a very important asset.”<sup>11</sup>

Rosemount has a growing senior population although smaller than the United States average, which was 12.9 percent of the population in 2009.<sup>12</sup> Rosemount has been doing a better

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<sup>9</sup> Minkler, 2012, p. 173

<sup>10</sup> Minkler, 2012, p. 174

<sup>11</sup> Minkler, 2012, p. 176

<sup>12</sup> Administration on Aging, n.d.

job at meeting the needs of senior residents that are independent in their homes. There is a variety of senior housing available:

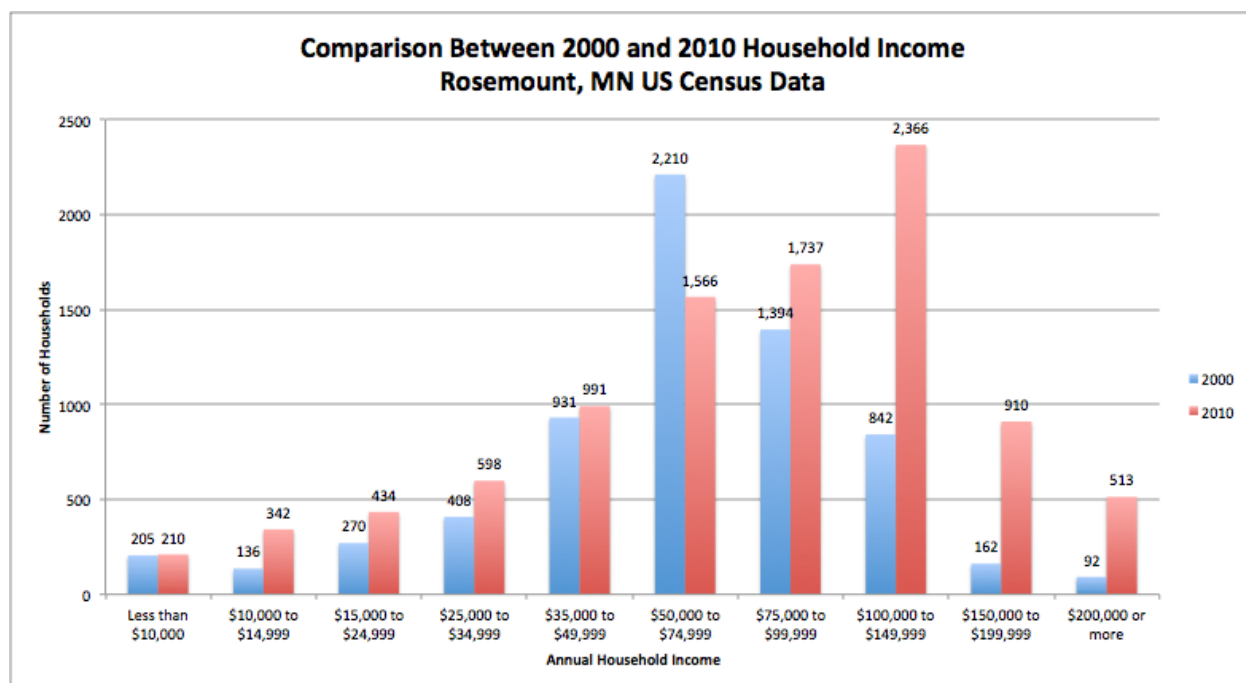
- Cameo Place Senior Housing Unit Location located off west of Highway 3 on Lower 147th Street in Rosemount. Other units are available on Burma Ave West.
- Senior Communities at Bard's Crossing and Crosscroft
- "The Rosemount" (under construction)
- Cambrian Commons: Dakota County Community Development Agency (CDA), to be located on South Robert Trail south of 145th Street West. (In development)
- Market-rate apartments
- Homes owned

"The Rosemount" is a great step forward for bringing much needed assisted living and memory care to Rosemount. Our findings suggest that there are many seniors who have had to leave Rosemount when they needed more assistance in day-to-day care, which makes it harder for them to access their community support system. In addition, there are seniors who are starting to look at what they are going to need in aging over the next 5, 10, 15 or more years. In the meeting with the developer of "The Rosemount" and Augustana Care stakeholders, it was stated that some of these individuals who left Rosemount have expressed interest in coming back. Other two major groups of interest are seniors already living in Rosemount and parents of adult children living in Rosemount.

### **Planning for Income Inequality Among Elders**

One area for concern is income inequality among the citizens of Rosemount, thus affordable housing options available for seniors. A look at census data between 2000 and 2010 shows that, like the rest of the United States, Rosemount is experiencing widening disparities in income. In 2000, a majority of Rosemount families earned about \$50,000-\$75,000 annually. As the income distribution chart below highlights, this range, arguably the middle to upper-middle

class of Rosemount was the top of the bell curve. Families making significantly less or more than \$50,000-\$100,000 annually were outliers.



By 2010 the income distribution had shifted. A majority of households were earning upward of \$50,000, peaking at \$100,000-\$150,000. All income brackets north of \$50,000 increased; however the number of people falling into income brackets south of \$50,000 increased as well. Income disparities can lead to service and housing disparities, especially when it comes to assisted-living. Many of the units available through “The Rosemount” will be private pay, with smaller capacity for waivers that would allow access to Medical Assistance recipients. When we think about an “age-prepared” community, it is preparing for the needs of residents at all areas of the income spectrum. Without waivers or ability to access resources with private pay, individuals needing more support lack enough supports and housing options. We were unable to determine senior income levels through data provided, and recommend future exploration in this area.

# Recommendations

## 1. Create an Elder Coalition that meets once a month

The coalition's primary goal is to provide programs, services, and opportunities for senior living. This should be city-led as an effort to include all community members regardless of which faction they participate in. Recommended agenda items include: listening sessions, guest speakers about local resources, volunteer opportunities, networking, creating inclusivity and feelings of connections between seniors and stakeholders. Stakeholders may include: elected officials, business leaders, senior service providers, cultural and faith groups, hospitals, long-term care facilities, community volunteer coordinators and local media.

## 2. Develop and/or connect seniors to volunteer opportunities within the community

Some of the opportunities available to the city as they create plans to become "age-prepared" include empowering seniors to use their strengths as volunteers. Volunteering with appropriate infrastructure supports aging in place. Examples include: food delivery, visit those with disabilities and helping care for children. Interviews with Rosemount senior residents identified seniors as a "worthy and untapped" resource. The residents in this group interview strongly felt that they had gifts and strengths to offer the city that are being underutilized. In addition, creating partnerships with the faith-based organizations in Rosemount that already have communication networks in place would give the city access to large numbers of the aging population.



### 3. Development of an age-prepared strategic plan

A capacity-focused approach to mapping out solutions and policies to issues like caregiving and Alzheimer's disease can be addressed in the "age-prepared" city by engaging the local community to invest themselves, and their resources.<sup>13</sup> "Elder-Friendly communities" are places that actively involve, value, and support older adults, both active and frail, with infrastructure and services that effectively accommodate their changing needs."<sup>14</sup> Challenges include needed community support for seniors to age in their own homes and consideration should be given to a "more integrated aging infrastructure, with increased housing, transportation, social service, and health care options that meet the needs of both active and frail older adults."<sup>15</sup> To become "age-prepared" it is critical for communities to be thinking about their future demographics and be assessing and planning on how to meet the needs of those projections. The city of Rosemount has already begun this process by joining with the Resilient Communities Project.

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<sup>13</sup> Minkler, 2012, p. 172

<sup>14</sup> Alley, Liebig, Pynoos, Banerjee, & Choi, 2007, p. 1

<sup>15</sup> Alley, Liebig, Pynoos, Banerjee, & Choi, 2007, p. 4

#### 4. Overall development of resources available to seniors based on a continuum of need.

Chief concerns among this population include: addressing caregiving and Alzheimer's disease, transportation, walkability in downtown area, caregiving, assisted living, and in-home nursing care. Consider partnering with community business and faith-based resources to meet needs. For instance, Augustana Care shared that once fully staffed, they would be able to bring services into the community. Places like Cameo Place could be registered as a "Housing with Services" building and residents could have access to services that will allow elders to stay in their homes longer. Likewise, look to other established groups for models of care. Lyngblomsten, located in St. Paul, Minnesota coordinates, "The Gathering Program," to provide respite care for people with memory loss and caregiver support groups.<sup>16</sup> There are already informal transportation networks used in the senior group to ensure that residents are able to attend senior activities. Consider building upon these networks for greater access.

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.lyngblomsten.org/community-services/gathering/>

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# Appendix

## **Appendix A.**

### **Survey Questions Asked to Seniors**

1. What can the city of Rosemount do, now and as you age, to enhance your quality of life?
2. What strengths do you and/or the senior community in Rosemount already have that can be built upon for change?